

W5YI

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable.

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VECs Hold 17th Annual Conference with FCC Officials

The 2002 edition of the *National Conference of VECs* got underway on Friday, July 27th at the Holiday Inn in Gettysburg, PA as NCVEC Chairman John Creel, WB3GXW called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.. There were 11 VEC organizations in attendance, (Anchorage, ARRL, CAVEC, GEARS, GLAARG, LAUREL, MRAC, SANDARC, Sunnyvale, WCARS, and the W5YI-VEC groups.) representing more than 98% of all examinations administered in the Amateur Service during the past year. Not in attendance were delegations from the W4VEC, Jefferson and MOKAN VECs.

A VEC acts as the link between the volunteer examiner (VE) community and the FCC. Their function is to approve volunteer examiners and to provide testing guidance, license examination materials and electronic filing of Amateur Radio license applications for their accredited VE teams. The VECs *Question Pool Committee* (QPC) is also responsible for revising the various banks of questions used in all Amateur Radio license examinations.

The VEC System currently consists of 14 VEC organizations who oversee the activities of an estimated 3,000 VE teams and some 35,000 accredited VEs. They meet annually with Washington D.C. and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania Federal Communication Commission officials to discuss and agree on Amateur Service examination and licensing issues.

NCVEC Chairman John Creel welcomed everyone and explained the agenda. He felt that the

Question Pool Committee's importance to Amateur Radio was relatively unrecognized by the amateur community. "To increase the general participation of amateurs in the question pool process, the amateur press needs to emphasize the QPC's role in determining the future of Amateur Radio," Creel said.

He also noted that the VECs need to collectively find a solution to Amateur Radio license testing in remote areas.

New business

A web page supported by the NCVEC was proposed by Larry Pollock, NB5X of the W5YI-VEC. He suggested that the "NCVEC.org" domain be registered. The proposal was approved and a first year website budget not to exceed \$1000 was appropriated by the VECs. Links will be provided to each VECs webpage.

Next, Gordon Girton, W6NW of the Sunnyvale-VEC proposed a change to the Morse examination procedures: He asked the NCVEC to agree to once again allow Morse code exams with multiple choice answer formats. After much discussion, it was agreed not to change the current Morse code testing standards which does not permit the use of multiple choice answer formats.

Committee Reports

The minutes of the previous conference were accepted unanimously.

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Treasurer Ray Adams, W4CPA of the WCARS-VEC gave a brief financial report: The balance of the NCVEC account is around \$42,000 before 2002 Conference expenses are deducted.

The **Question Pool Committee Report** was given by QPC Chairman Scotty Neustadter, W4WW of the CAVEC-VEC: The QPC is currently on a four-year cycle; a one year review period each for the Technician, General and Extra pools, then one is "skipped" to allow "think time" to review all questions. The Element 2 (Technician Class) question pool is currently being worked on and the QPC is anticipating the elimination of Morse testing by WRC-2003 as they develop the new pool.

The new Technician pool is scheduled to be released into the public domain on December 1, 2002, the General pool is to be released 12/1/2003 and the Extra pool is to be released 12/1/2005 (after the "skip" year.) Jim Wiley, KL7CC (Anchorage-VEC) said that continuation of the QPC was important enough to warrant an "apprenticeship program" for future QPC members.

QPC Chairman Scotty Neustadter said he agreed in general, but was not clear how this concept could be implemented. John Johnston, W4BE (Laurel-VEC) suggested "beta testers" for the pools. Scotty said the QPC gladly solicits proofreaders, but that the tight schedule precludes a large number of persons having an extensive debate over question topics and pool content. Diane Zimmerman, AA3OF (Laurel VEC) made a motion to re-elect the current QPC membership; this motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Michele Cimbala, WK3X (Laurel-VEC) gave the **VEC Instructions Committee Report**. She said that it was a "quiet" year at the FCC, so there were very few changes to be made in the VEC Instructions. What few changes there were, were reviewed and/or discussed among the VECs present. The VEC Instructions are a complete list of VEC-developed guidelines that all VECs have agreed to follow in the interest of examination standardization.

Update on WRC-2003

A special presentation on WRC 2003 was given by **Rules Committee Chairman** Fred Maia of the W5YI-VEC. Since WARC 2003 will be held June 9 to July 4, 2003, its results will be known by the time the next NCVEC Conference is held. He went into the details of the *IARU Recommendation* for minimum qualifications for radio amateurs (*ITU-R M.1544*) and said that the new Technician pool syllabus was drafted taking the topics in the *Recommendation* into consideration.

He said that the current 11-paragraph international Amateur service regulations have been in effect for more than 75 years. "It is interesting to note that the only changes made to the Amateur Service regulations contained in Article S25 since 1925 concern the frequency

above which amateurs may operate without Morse testing. In 1948 the frequency was reduced to 1000 MHz, in 1959 to 100 MHz ...and in 1979 to 30 MHz where it stands today," Maia said.

S25.5 contains the current international requirements for Morse proficiency when amateurs operate at frequencies under 30 MHz. It is widely expected that after WRC 2003, the mandatory Morse requirement will be waived (this is a European proposal that would allow Russia to retain Morse proficiency ...which they want to do) or that the code requirement will simply be removed entirely from the international Radio Regulations.

He pointed out that due to the required FCC rule-making process, it may be as late as 2005 before any adopted WRC-2003 changes -- including eliminating the Morse testing requirement -- find their way into U.S. ham radio.

It also appears that a new IARU-initiated 6-paragraph S25 will be agreed to by the U.S. WRC-2003 delegation and those nations attending the conference. The new proposed S25 reads as follows:

ARTICLE 25

Amateur services

Section I - Amateur service

25.1 § 1 Administrations shall verify the technical and operational qualifications of any person wishing to operate an amateur station.

25.2 § 2 1) Transmissions between amateur stations of different countries shall be limited to communications incidental to the purposes of the amateur service or of a personal character.

2) Except with the authority of the relevant administration granted to meet a particular operational need, transmissions between amateur stations shall not be encoded for the purpose of obscuring their meaning.

25.3 § 3 Administrations are urged to take the steps necessary to allow amateur stations to prepare for and meet communication needs in the event of a natural disaster.

25.4 § 4 An administration may, without issuing a licence, permit a person who has been granted a license to operate an amateur station by another administration, to operate an amateur station while that person is temporarily in its territory, subject to such conditions or restrictions it may impose.

Section II - Amateur-satellite service

25.5 § 5 The provisions of Section I of this Article shall apply equally, as appropriate, to the amateur-satellite service.

25.6 § 6 Administrations authorizing space stations shall ensure that sufficient earth command stations are

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established before launch to ensure that any harmful interference caused by emissions from a station in the amateur-satellite service can be immediately eliminated.

Some of the notable changes involve updating the "plain language" requirement by replacing it with "not encoded for the purpose of obscuring their meaning," eliminating the "third party communications" prohibition and "banned countries" list, recognizing the disaster communications capability of the Amateur service, authorizing and encouraging countries to permit visiting amateurs to operate without being required to issue them a license and eliminating the requirement to prove Morse code ability.

Some previous provisions were also eliminated since they are covered in other ITU regulations that already apply to the Amateur services (such as the maximum transmitter power, purity of emissions and station identification) ...or were matters that should be addressed in national rather than international regulations.

Amateur radio in Great Britain after WRC-2003

Fred reported how Great Britain has decided how their Amateur Service will be structured after WRC-2003. The United Kingdom has adopted and already implemented a new 10-watt entry-level (Foundation) license in which a Morse receiving test is basically unnecessary. The UK Novice license has been renamed the Intermediate Class and authorizes 50 watts on all frequency bands. The UK no-code (under 30 MHz) and full privilege license will be combined into an all band, all privilege license once WRC-2003 eliminates the Morse requirement. There are no mode subbands in Great Britain.

Fred said that the US could easily adopt the same approach for its license structure by elevating all Technician Class operators (who have already been tested on HF topics) to the General Class and using the "slot" in the FCC's computer system for a new 10-watt all-band beginners class.

FCC presentations

Bill Cross, W3TN of the FCC's Rules Branch, Washington DC noted two upcoming FCC items which could affect the question pools: (1) OET Docket 02-98 (an NPRM of three ARRL petitions) is expected as a *Report and Order* early next year, and (2) an upcoming NPRM "bundle" incorporating several received Petitions for Rulemaking probably affecting all sections of the FCC Rules will follow.

In OET Docket No. 02-98 (a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* released May 15, 2002) the FCC proposed new LF and HF bands at 135.7- 137.8 kHz (low frequency, LF) and 5250- 5400 kHz (HF) bands to the Amateur Radio Service on a secondary basis. Both proposals were based on Petitions filed by the ARRL - (RM-9404 filed November 23, 1998 and RM-10209 filed August 13,

2001). The low frequency band would permit experimentation and the new 5 MHz HF band would improve emergency and disaster relief communications between the U.S. and its Caribbean islands.

The Commission also tentatively has agreed to upgrade the existing secondary Amateur Radio Service allocation in the 2400-2402 MHz band to primary status and to add a primary allocation for the Amateur-Satellite Service in this band. (Requested by ARRL in RM-9949 filed July 17, 2000.) Comments on all three proposals closed July 29, 2002. Reply comments are due by August 12, 2001.

As a clarification to a few inquiries sent to the FCC, Bill Cross said that in case of legal conflicts, the *Communications Act* takes precedence over the FCC Rules, but that when appropriate, the Rules can be and are modified to better correspond to the *Act*.

Cross concluded his presentation by confirming that any changes to the Morse testing rules due to WRC-2003 will undergo the standard NPRM/comment cycle.

FCC staffers Brian Dodd and Pat Rinn, gave a demo of some new ULS web pages and a new procedure that will allow the VECs to electronically file license information with the FCC beginning in November. VEC testing of the new procedure will begin near the end of August.

The FCC's Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH gave his report on Amateur Radio enforcement issues. He said he is very pleased with the VECs and regards them as the most important link between amateurs and the FCC. Overall, enforcement is proceeding well but it still has a long way to go. He mentioned that around 50 amateur operators work with the FBI at Quantico as part of an anti-terrorism effort. He emphasized that hams should realize that they are "ambassadors" for the United States when they are on the international airwaves.

Exam auditing and retesting is a necessary part of enforcement; retesting of Puerto Rico exams taken as far back as 1998 is now finished. He requested that the names of any new VEs accredited in Puerto Rico be sent to the FCC. VECs should continue to take security precautions to protect their submissions.

In summary, he said the good news is that there is no big news from the FCC's Enforcement Division and that he anticipates fewer examination irregularities in the future. R.C. Smith, W6RZA (GLAARG-VEC) asked if new technologies (such as "EchoLink") will introduce any new enforcement problems; Riley said the FCC adopts a wait-and-see attitude before making new regulations for an emerging technology.

EchoLink is software which allows Amateur Radio stations to communicate with one another over the Internet, using voice-over-IP (VoIP) technology. The program allows worldwide connections to be made between stations, from computer-to-station, or from computer-to-

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computer.

For licensed hams, EchoLink opens up new possibilities for communicating around the world with other amateurs. Your PC links you or your local repeater to any of thousands of other stations over the Internet.

The program runs on Microsoft™ Windows® 95 or above. It is offered as (constantly updated) freeware and may be downloaded from <www.echolink.org>. A tutorial on how EchoLink works is available on the Web at: <www.echolink.org/el/tour.htm>.

John Creel spoke for all the VECs in saying "thank you" to Riley for FCC Enforcement's good work.

Donna Scott of Gettysburg FCC next distributed a "scoreboard" ranking of VEC license electronic filings for the past year. A summary follows:

Amateur Radio License Testing - 7-15-2001 to 7-15-2002

VEC Organiz.	Elements Passed	Elements Failed	Applic. Tested	Percent of Total
ARRL-VEC	29,903	11,908	24,601	62.5%
W5YI-VEC	7,971	2,537	8,266	21.0%
WCARS	1,207	485	1,564	4.0%
Laurel VEC	1,110	506	1,184	3.0%
CAVEC	761	331	993	2.5%
Greater LA	430	211	590	1.5%
W4VEC	397	231	557	1.4%
SanDARC	455	122	502	1.3%
Sunnyvale	426	123	487	1.2%
Anchorage	166	158	251	.6%
Milwaukee	166	53	178	.5%
Mo-Kan	71	38	86	.2%
GEARS	53	13	62	.2%
Jefferson	32	12	36	.1%
Totals:	43,148	16,738	39357	100%

VEC license testing in remote areas of Alaska

As a followup to last year's Conference, Jim Wiley, KL7CC (of the Anchorage VEC) gave a report on how his VEC and others might administer amateur examinations in remote areas. He highlighted the fundamental problems: The lack of highway access to most remote areas prevents all but (expensive) air travel for VEs wanting to give exams in these areas. The cost of a three-examiner trip on a scheduled flight to a remote area would be approximately \$2,600; the alternative would be about \$840 per applicant to fly to Anchorage for an exam. If an applicant fails, there is almost no chance to retake an exam in the near future.

Only about 240 remote communities are large enough to even have a post office; of these, only about half have enough qualified VEs to administer even a Technician exam. "Because amateur licenses are hard to obtain, bootlegging on 2 meters is very common," Wiley said.. Although the Anchorage VEC is funded by the

Anchorage Amateur Radio Club and its exams are free, its funding is not sufficient to serve the multitude of remote communities. Transportation costs for the physical presence of a three-person VE team precludes most remote communities from obtaining amateur licenses.

Jim made the suggestion of using a "proctor" -- a pre-approved trusted non-amateur person -- to oversee the administration of the exam, but not to participate in the grading of it. He suggested that eligible applicants might be limited to only those in remote areas having no connecting roads to locations where license exams are given.

John Johnston, W3BE suggested that the rule saying "each administering VE must be present and observing the candidate" might be re-interpreted to mean that three VE's could "observe" the testing over the Internet. Jim recommended that a trial program be launched to gain experience with real-world examples and to help determine what the specific testing requirements and qualifications should be.

Most VECs agreed that the Anchorage VEC could begin a trial program lasting for one year and report its progress at the next NCVEC Conference. Win Guin, W2GLJ (WCARS-VEC) said that whatever the NCVEC approves, "...we should proceed with caution; [since] the process could get out of control." Gene Wright, WA6ZRT (GEARS-VEC) wanted to see Jim Wiley's plan before any remote testing over the Internet was started.

Win motioned that: "The NCVEC approve the testing by the Anchorage VEC of certain remotely-located amateur license candidates in the state of Alaska for a trial period of one year. Each VEC and the FCC will be given a detailed description of the program to be instituted. All will receive notification of examination session results within 10 days of any examination." Scotty Neustadter, W4WW (CAVEC) seconded the motion and it passed, 6 yea, 3 nay, with 2 abstaining.

Election of NCVEC Officers

As the last action of the Conference, John Creel conducted the election of NCVEC officers for 2002/3. All the following officers were elected unanimously:

NCVEC Chairman: John Creel, WB3GXW
Vice-Chairman: Win Guin, W2GLJ
Treasurer: Ray Adams, W4CPA
Secretary: Steve Sternitzke, NS5I
QPC Chairman: Scotty Neustadter, W4WW
QPC members: Fred Maia W5YI, Johnny Johnston W3BE and Bart Jahnke W9JJ
VEC Instructions Chairman: Michele Cimbala, WK3X
VEC Instructions Vice-Chairman: Gene Wright, WA6ZRT
Rules Committee Chairman: Fred Maia, W5YI

The 2003 NCVEC Annual Meeting was tentatively scheduled for July 25, 2003.

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CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY

For a while it appeared that disposable, recyclable cellphones were wishful thinking. But it looks like they will indeed be introduced nationally since "Hop-on Wireless" of Garden Grove, California has (according to the company) just won FCC approval to sell the throw-away phones in convenience stores and gas stations.

The phones have been featured in *Time Magazine*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and *Business Week* stories.

Hop-On cellphones are plastic and are about the size of a deck of playing cards: (2"x4"x½"). Consumers pay a flat \$40 for 60 minutes of service. (We had previously heard \$30.) They do not take incoming calls, and there's no keypad or display. Instead, users plug in an earpiece (included), press the "call" button and speak the number aloud. Voice-recognition technology converts the sounds into digits and places the call.

Self-contained lithium batteries last for up to two years, so your minutes will run out before your batteries do. Customers can buy additional 60, 90 and 120 minute talk-time cards.

The phones are based on a low-cost chipset from Philips Electronics and use Qualcomm CDMA spread-spectrum technology at 800-MHz. A lower-priced GSM model (\$29) is in the works which will be marketed in Europe where the GSM standard is popular. The cellphones will be manufactured overseas.

Phone numbers are assigned locally. Calls made within the same area code are local, but calling between area codes would involve paying additional toll charges. A \$5 rebate is paid to customers who want to recycle their phone. More info at: <www.hop-on.com>.

Attorney General John Ashcroft said it could be hard for the government to monitor terrorists who use such phones.)

EMERGING COMMUNICATIONS

Direct-broadcast satellite TV provider, (Hughes Electronics Corp.'s) DirecTV added more than 200,000 new subscribers in the second quarter and now has 10.74 million DBS customers who pay an average

of \$58.10 per month. EchoStar Communication Corp's DISH Network has 7.16 million subscribers.

EchoStar has proposed to purchase Hughes Electronics for \$20 billion and merge the DISH and DirecTV networks into a single DBS broadcaster. By doing so, the combined satellite network would be able to eliminate duplicate programming and deliver local broadcast channels to all 210 U.S. television markets.

Cable TV companies presently control more than 80 percent of the U.S. pay television market. A combined DISH-DirecTV would provide service to about 17 percent of the pay-TV market and 90 percent of the U.S. digital satellite TV market. The merger, if approved by the FCC and Dept. of Justice, would be completed by the end of the year.

Consumers are still confused and hesitant about high definition television. A new CTAM (Cable & Telecommunications Association for Marketing) Research study indicates that 60.3 percent of consumers are aware of high-definition television. But half of all consumers said they "didn't know" how the signal was delivered.

Of the remainder, 20 percent of the consumers said they believed HDTV signals are delivered to the home from a cable TV provider. Less than 30 percent correctly knew that HDTV is currently delivered by a satellite provider or by using an over-the-air antenna. (Extremely few cable providers have HDTV capability.)

Fifty-seven percent of consumers do not know that new equipment would be necessary to watch high-definition television. And a majority of consumers (52.7 percent) believe that a high-definition television set costs under \$2,000.

Only slightly more than one in 10 (11.6 percent) say they are "very" or "somewhat likely" to buy an HDTV set in the next year. And four out of five consumers (81.3 percent) said they would not be buying an HDTV set in the next year. See: <www.ctam.com>.

Get ready for a deluge of primetime programming commemorating the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. For example, Discovery Networks plans 14 hours of programming on its five cable networks.

On July 23rd, the FCC released statistics indicating that the number of high-speed Internet subscribers

jumped to 12.8 million as of December 1, 2001, an increase of 80.3 percent for the year. (7.1 million were cable modem subscribers compared to 3.9 million DSL subscribers.) Eleven million of the 12.8 million high-speed lines served residential and small business subscribers, a 41% increase from the 7.8 million reported just six months earlier.

The major movie studios are still pressing Congress to incorporate digital copy-protection schemes into home entertainment hardware and software so that perfect digital copies cannot be swapped over the Internet. As a result, several members of Congress have urged the FCC to require that makers of computers, DVD players, television sets and recording devices embed technology into their machines to prevent TV viewers from redistributing digital content. Movie studios want to prevent a person from recording a show in one place and retrieving it over the Web to watch somewhere else. One Senate bill would subject a consumer to a \$25,000 fine if they removed a "watermark" from a DVD, movie or electronic book to send it over the Internet.

COMPUTERS & SOFTWARE

Dell Computer Corp. recently said it intends to develop and sell its own branded printers. Hewlett-Packard Co. which takes Dell very seriously as a potential competitor, said it will no longer allow them to resell its printers.

Dell reportedly will affiliate with an existing printer manufacturer to sell Dell branded printers and ink cartridges. (Number 2 printer maker Lexmark is rumored to be the unnamed partner.)

GADGETS & GIZMOS

Last month, RCA introduced three new rear projection, widescreen "Scenium" HDTV sets that not only include the needed high definition tuner but a broadband Internet browser as well.

You simply plug your cable modem or DSL into the back of the TV to go high speed Internet surfing. A keyboard is available as an accessory. Using a split screen, you can even watch a TV program and browse the web or receive or send their mail at the same time from your living room.

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The 65-inch model has a suggested retail price of \$4,299, 61-inch \$3,799 and the 52-inch lists for \$3,299. (Web-site at: <www.rcascenium.com>.)

Disney characters to be featured in new state-of-the-art personal communications products. Aimed at children ages 6 to 12, Disney's first electronic products will include a two-way *Family Radio Service* radio and a 2.4 GHz analog cordless telephone. You will see them on store shelves in time for holiday selling. The Disney character products will be developed, manufactured and distributed by Motorola and feature both the Disney and the Motorola brand names.

The new 14-channel two-way FRS radios (sold in pairs with a suggested retail of \$59.99) will feature the voices of Cinderella, Mickey Mouse and Buzz Lightyear and animated character displays from Pixar. The 2.4 GHz cordless telephone (also at \$59.99) has musical ring tones inspired by Disney characters.

Disney's personal communications electronics line will be expanded in Spring 2003. On the web, check out: <www.motorola.com/cordless/disney> or <www.motorola.com/radios/disney>.

Broadband at any AC electrical outlet! Phonex Broadband, (Midvale, Utah) has a novel computer networking solution. "NeverWire 14" uses a building's electrical wiring to power your PC and distribute broadband signals. The small box-like devices require no software or additional cables. You plug your cable or DSL modem into one and your computer into the other. Up to 16 devices can operate off of the AC powerline carrier (PLC) network. (\$129 per node.) More info at: <www.phonex.com>.

INTERNET & WORLD WIDE WEB

Ever wonder how movie theaters get filled up quickly when a hot new movie comes to your area? Internet ticket sites are pre-selling tickets weeks before they open. It is getting to be big business. The big three are: www.fandango.com, MovieTickets.com and Moviefone.com. "Spiderman," "Star Wars: Attack of the Clones," and "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" all had very big advance Internet sales.

Be thankful you don't live in Burma (now called Myanmar) where all infor-

mation in and out of the country is tightly controlled by their authoritarian military regime. There are no elections.

The Ministry of Defense operates the country's only known Internet server and offers Internet services only to a small number (about 500) business customers who are friendly with the ruling junta.

All computer owners must have a license and all web pages need permission before being produced. The Burmese government operates a website at: <www.-myanmar.com> which contains links to government-sponsored news and information.

There is no general public access available to the Internet and "illegal use of a modem" is punishable by 15 years in prison.

A few cyber cafes have emerged in Rangoon. Although they call themselves Internet cafes, they have no access to the Internet, only allowing customers to use CD-ROMs. They are basically used as libraries.

Burma recently announced that it would be introducing the Intranet for its people but it only affords local use and does not have access to the World Wide Web. Its main server will have only 16 phone lines meaning that only 16 users will be able to access the system at one time. This for a country of 42 million.

E-mail is very slow in Burma. Only one government-owned e-mail service is available and all e-mail passwords must be provided to authorities. All incoming e-mail is first reviewed and subscribers must wait three or four days to receive it. Break the rules and the password gets changed.

It is also illegal for private companies to link to their overseas offices or even to own a fax machine without a government license.

Citizens do not have the right to change their government and teachers may not criticize the political system, discuss politics in their classes, join or support political parties or meet with foreigners without advance ministerial approval. Teachers are also responsible for the political activities of their students. Unauthorized outdoor assemblies of more than five persons are prohibited.

Journalists and reporters are barred from the country and must enter under the guise of being a tourist. [We should be very grateful for the U.S. Constitution and the citizen rights it grants!]

The *Wall Street Journal* is reporting that **300 Internet sites in China (including Yahoo! Inc.'s Chinese-language site) have signed a voluntary pledge** to purge the Web of content that China's communist government deems subversive.

The "Public Pledge on Self-Discipline for China Internet Industry" fosters promotion of Internet use, prevention of cybercrime, fostering healthy industry competition, and avoiding intellectual property violations." It also requires signers to refrain from "producing, posting or disseminating pernicious (detrimental) information that may jeopardize state security and disrupt social stability" including information that breaks laws and spreads "superstition and obscenity." Signers also pledged to monitor content of foreign-based Web sites and block those containing "...harmful information."

The *Wall Street Journal* said that "As of April, China had more than 38 million Internet users and nearly 280,000 Web sites." Internet cafes are required to track sites their users visit and report attempts to open those deemed subversive.

The Gartner Group, a telecommunications consulting firm, estimated last month that about 80,000 of China's 200,000 Internet cafes are uncensored.

An *Associated Press* story said China is now the number three user of the Internet in the world - after the United States and Japan - even though only 3 percent of its 1.26 billion citizens are on the web. China now has 16 million computers linked to the Internet, an increase of 61 percent over a year ago.

How to get out of credit card debt. **Just ask for donations over the Web!** That is what one young lady is doing at: <www.savekaryn.com>. Karyn (who last name remains secret) is a 26-year old New Yorker who has \$20,000 in credit card debt. She established the online begging site a couple of months ago and Website visitors are indeed donating to Karyn's cause. She has raised over \$700 so far from people all over the world. ("PayPal" credit card payments are accepted online.) Karyn keeps an online diary of how things are going. "If you feel my pain - feel free to give me a dollar!" The *New York Times* said a movie studio has already contacted her about acquiring the rights to her story.

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America Online's Internet access market share has slipped 4 percentage points to 37 percent. In a \$106 merger, AOL joined forces with Time-Warner in January 2001 in what was termed a transformation from the old to the new media. It hasn't worked out.

Since then, AOL-Time Warner shares have plunged 75 percent ...and nearly 90 percent from its all time high. And like many other corporations, there are questions about its accounting practices. It seems that AOL took credit for millions of dollars in advertising revenue that didn't belong to their division in order to bolster profit. That didn't sit well with corporate executives.

Their former CEO, Barry Schuler and Chief Operating Officer, Robert Pittman, have both departed under pressure. We also heard that many other AOL middle management executives may soon follow.

AOL founder Steve Case, and current chairman of AOL Time Warner, is the last senior executive from AOL still among top Time Warner management. But his power now is greatly diminished and some see him as a liability as AOL Time Warner tries to rebuild its credibility on Wall Street, especially amid allegations that AOL was less than fully candid about its revenues in the period preceding the deal.

AOL has nearly 35 million subscribers who pay about \$20 a month -- far ahead of its nearest competitor, Microsoft's MSN, which has 8 million. But growth has slowed as many of their existing dial-up subscribers and potential new customers move to the higher-speed Internet access offered by other DSL providers and cable modem systems.

About 20 percent of all American households with an Internet connection now have a high-speed connection. Forrester Research says "U.S. consumers are switching from dial-up to broadband faster than new households are getting dial-up." Not good news for AOL at all.

AOL offers broadband service, but their transition to broadband is going slow. America Online now has only a 4 percent share of the 12 million broadband subscribers in the United States,

Since Time Warner is in the cable business, AOL's former partners now look at them as competitors. As a result, it has not forged any major deals with other cable companies to carry AOL as an Internet access service on their lines.

Looking for a hotel room at the guaranteed best rate? We strongly suggest you check out <hotels.com>. This Internet site sells discounted rooms on the web and its sales are surging! Its sales rose to \$229.7 million in the second-quarter ...a 66 percent sales increase from a year ago and its profit more than quadrupled.

Check out its new website which has only been online less than six months. Hotels.com is owned by USA Interactive (a \$6 billion company) which also owns Ticketmaster, Expedia, Home Shopping Network, CitySearch and Match.com, a dating service.

Hotels.com used to be known as Hotel Reservations Network. Its reservation search and sales service is very easy to use.

The erosion of personal privacy; it is becoming more difficult to keep one's past hidden. One disadvantage of Google's (and other) search engines and online government records (such as tax assessments, court documents, voter registrations and the like) is that anyone can learn about you...especially if you have an uncommon name, have posted to the Web or have been in the news. Robotic programs can now "crawl" around the Internet and index every word.

The combined power of the Internet, search engines and archival databases make it relatively simple to find information about almost anyone. It is now very common for people to check out those they meet at parties ...or their neighbors and co-workers. The problem is that much of the posted information can be incomplete, out of context, misleading or simply dead wrong. You might want to enter your name in some search engines and see what is "out there" in cyberspace about you.

WASHINGTON WHISPERS

Thirty percent of all airline travel tickets are now purchased over the Web and online's share of the \$90 billion travel market continues to grow.

Practically all tickets for web-based travel sites are electronic tickets or just an itinerary that you print out on your PC. E-tickets offers an opportunity for airlines to realize significant savings in ticket distribution costs.

Travel agents and other online travel sites (including the number one and two: Travelocity and Expedia) are

especially outraged at (number three) Orbitz which is owned by the five largest airlines: American Airlines, United Airlines, Continental Airlines, Delta Air Lines and Northwest Airlines. They say that arrangement is "anti-competitive" and constitutes a monopoly since the five airlines control more than three-quarters of all domestic air travel.

Orbitz is accused of having an unfair advantage by rival online services since in order to be listed, participating airlines must offer Orbitz their lowest fare before it can be listed online elsewhere.

Congress and the Justice Department are now looking into that requirement and the legality of supplier-owned online travel sites.

During the last seven years, travel agents have seen airline ticket commissions plunge from a straight 10 percent, to 5 percent with a \$20 per-ticket cap ...to no commissions at all. Most travel agents now charge a fee, \$20 to \$30 per ticket.

A Consumer Reports study published in their June issue said the three largest online travel firms do indeed offer the best airfares. It did, however, question marketing arrangements between the airlines and the online travel companies, which receive bonuses - just like traditional travel agents - for meeting sales targets for individual carriers and said there was a need for federal regulation.

Orbitz (owned by large carriers) did well in finding cheap and workable flight itineraries but often missed less expensive fares offered by smaller carriers.

Consumer Reports added that web travel shoppers should check low-cost carrier Southwest Airlines since their tickets are not made available to other online travel companies and are often the lowest cost.

Jonathan Adelstein has been nominated to serve the remainder of the term of former FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani. Adelstein was Senator Tom Daschle's (D-S.D.) telecommunications advisor for seven years. He has been praised for his commitment to broadband deployment in rural areas. The long delay in bringing his nomination to the Senate was caused when Senator John McCain (R-Az) vowed to hold up all pending nominations. McCain is displeased with current FCC leadership and the Telecommunications Act of 1996. If the Senate confirms Adelstein, he would become the fifth commissioner and the second Democrat

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on the FCC. Unless the president nominates someone else to replace Adelstein when the term expires next June, he will be allowed to continue serving until Congress adjourns in late 2004.

New model automobile radar detectors are interfering with small satellite data systems ...disrupting credit-card transactions at gas pumps and music systems in fast-food outlets.

On July 19th, the FCC released an Order requiring that radar detectors operating above 960 MHz restrict their radiated energy to the same limits as required of radar detectors operating under 960 MHz. Furthermore, all radar detectors must be certified to demonstrate compliance with these limits before they can be marketed.

The action was taken to reduce interference from radar detectors to very small aperture satellite terminals (VSATs.) VSATs are commonly used by small businesses such as stores and gas stations.

Radar detectors that warn of the presence of police speed-measuring radars are currently exempt from complying with the Part 15 emission limits because they are receivers that tune only above 960 MHz.

They are designed to monitor for the presence of police radar in several frequency bands, including the 10.50-10.55 GHz, 24.05-24.25 GHz and 33.4-36.0 GHz bands.

The FCC noted that the potential for radar detectors to interfere with VSATs has recently increased because radar detector manufacturers have begun using oscillators at higher frequencies that place swept frequency emissions within the VSAT downlink band.

Tests on several radar detectors at the Commission's laboratory found emission levels ranging from 33,000 $\mu\text{V}/\text{m}$ to 231,000 $\mu\text{V}/\text{m}$ at 3 meters within the VSAT band.

"These levels have a high potential for causing interference to satellite operations and are far greater than the satellite receive signal levels in the 11.7-12.2 GHz band," FCC said. "We conclude that the only reasonable solution to this interference situation is to require radar detectors to comply with emission limits before they are marketed."

Beginning sixty days after publication of the new rules in the Federal Register, all radar detectors marketed must comply with the same radiation limits as applies to

radar detectors operating under 960 MHz. This limit is 500 $\mu\text{V}/\text{m}$ measured at a distance of 3 meters. Furthermore, all radar detectors must be approved by the FCC's *Telecommunication Certification Bodies* (TCBs) prior to marketing.

AMATEUR RADIO NEWS

William F. Adams, KB0FWE (expired), Okoboji, IA, has been cited by the FCC for operating his Amateur Radio station after his station license expired on January 21, 2002. Continued such operation subjects Adams to a fine or imprisonment. "Fines normally range from \$7,500 to \$10,000." He is to contact the FCC.

Robert Redenburg, WB2DBY (Stone Ridge, NY) has his Amateur station inspected by FCC agents from the New York Field Office on January 28, 2002. No other details of the inspection were released and the matter is still under review.

Commonwealth Edison-Energy (Chicago, IL) has been contacted by the FCC relative to harmful interference being experienced by the Amateur Radio operation of David J. Janiec, K9XD, Lee P. Callaci, W9NSP, David G. Ewing, WB9PHQ, Bradley R. Ambro, N9EN and Edward R. Macke, WB9RJQ. The FCC reminded the electric utility company that operation of an incidental radiator is subject to the condition that no harmful interference be caused to the operation of an authorized radio station. "...If necessary to facilitate resolution, the FCC may investigate possible rules violations and address appropriate remedies." The electric utility company was advised to contact the ARRL for guidance. They must notify the FCC within 90 days of the steps being taken to resolve the interference.

Ramon A. Fernandez, KP4ZQ (Toa Baja, Puerto Rico) has had his license downgraded to the General Class. He had been ordered by the FCC to re-take all of the Amateur Extra Class examination elements by June 15, 2002. He passed only the General Class exams.

Randi W. Owen, N9UOM (Tomah, WI) has been cited by the FCC for allegedly marketing non-certified CB transceivers and HF linear amplifiers through Roper Electronics, a company Owen apparently owns. The illegal equipment was marketed at Internet website

<www.tomah.com/n9uom>. Owen is to forward the FCC a listing within 30 days of all HF transceivers and amplifiers domestically sold and/or offered for sale by Roper since January 1, 2002.

Kathy J. Raymer, KG4FWO (Algood, TN) has had her Amateur Radio license canceled for refusing to retake the Technician Class examination. On December 14, 1999, she passed the Technician Class examination at an ARRL-VEC testing session and allegedly her husband, Bobby A. Raymer, was one of the examiners which is prohibited by the rules.

Gregory Gordon, AC6VJ (Windsor, CA) is W6SON trustee operated by the Sonoma County Radio Amateurs (Santa Rosa, CA.) He has been asked to respond to interference complaints to the KD6LSO Sonoma County Repeater. The interference involves "new operation from the Castle Rock site and constant identification of the repeater even when there is no traffic on it."

Marcelino Llanes, KG6HBR (Oxnard, CA) General Class; **Manuel M. Vega, KG6GSP (Anaheim, CA)** General Class; **Marcial S. Rivas, KG6HCP (Salem, OR)** General Class; **Camito E. Lopez, KG6GJC (Los Angeles, CA)** Technician Class; and **Eddie C. Bartolome, N6YAG (Los Angeles, CA)** Technician Class all have had their licenses canceled due to failure to appear for re-examination. The five cancellations are a result of an audit of a W5YI-VEC exam session held Sept. 1, 2001 in Yucaipa, CA.

Michel LaChance, KC2HOW (Port Washington, NY) also had his license canceled due to failure to retake General Class exam by July 1, 2002.

Zbigniew J. Kolodziejczak, KA1UTK (Tolland, CT) was warned that an Amateur repeater system on 144.98/147.48 MHz in his area using his call sign is not licensed. The KA1UTK station license expired in November 2001. (KA1UTK has now been renewed.)

Kenneth M. Boyle KC2IDB, (Milford, NJ) has consented to a one year suspension of all Amateur privileges in order to settle an interference matter involving the local police and fire departments. He was also ordered to provide 75 hours community service and received one year probation. He has submitted his license to the FCC for the one year period.

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ARRL RECEIVES HOMELAND SECURITY TRAINING GRANT

The American Radio Relay League will receive a \$181,900 homeland security grant from the U.S. Government to train ham operators in emergency communication. According to ARRL Bulletin 43, the League was among several dozen non-profit organizations designated to receive some \$10.3 million in federal money to boost homeland defense volunteer programs.

The grant, from the *Corporation for National and Community Service* special volunteer program, will provide free ARRL *Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Course* training to 5200 volunteers nationwide, starting next year. This makes a total of \$215,000 in emergency training funding that the League has obtained over the past two months.

"ARRL is the national association for Amateur Radio and is the national leader in emergency communications by volunteers who operate their own equipment on their time at no cost to any government, organization, or corporation," said the announcement July 18 from Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge. The ARRL plans to revise and update the emergency communications curriculum to incorporate additional elements of emergency preparedness and homeland security.

ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, said he was extremely pleased by the news. "This adds legitimacy to the public service work Amateur Radio has been doing for years," he said.

ARRL Chief Development Officer Mary Hobart, K1MMH, applied for the funding in May. "I think this is an extraordinarily exciting day for Amateur Radio that the role of Amateur Radio in homeland security is recognized at the highest levels of government," Hobart said upon learning of the grant.

Citing Amateur Radio's response in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Hobart said the federal grant "...will help continue our work in providing public service and to protect lives, homes, businesses and our frequencies, as we have for decades."

ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, said he was pleased that the League would be able to extend its *Amateur Radio Emergency Communications* program to thousands of amateurs who might otherwise not be able to afford the program.

The grant announcement said that "...expanding the opportunities for Americans to participate in meaningful volunteer service" is at the heart of President George Bush's *USA Freedom Corps*, of which the *Corporation for National and Community Service* is a part.

"We are deeply grateful to Tom Ridge and to the *Corporation for National and Community Service* for providing Amateur Radio with a unique opportunity to serve our country," Hobart said.

In June, the ARRL received a \$33,000 grant from *United Technologies Corporation* which will be used to provide free ARRL *Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Course "Level I"* training for up to 250 Connecticut amateurs. Connecticut will serve as a model for similar training opportunities in other states.

Approximately 1000 Amateur Radio operators across the U.S. have completed the ARRL *Amateur Radio Emergency Communications "Level I"* course. The on-line instruction, offered as part of ARRL's *Certification and Continuing Education Program*, is made possible through the *Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC)*.

The introductory Level I course is designed to raise awareness and provide additional knowledge and tools for emergency communications volunteers. ARRL now offers three emergency communications classes--introduction, intermediate and advanced.

• **Josh Abramowicz, KB3GWY, of Reading, PA has been named the Amateur Radio Newsline™ Young Ham Of The Year for 2002.** Josh, a 17-year old Eagle Scout, is being honored for promoting Amateur Radio to young people through the Boy Scouts of America.

Abramowicz, a General Class licensee, will be entering his senior year at Central Catholic High School in Reading this fall. Josh's father, Mark, is NT3V and a News Reporter/Anchorman at KYW Radio in Philadelphia. His mother, Suzanna -- a retired teacher -- holds the call sign NZ3G. Both hold Extra class licenses.

The *Young Ham of the Year Award* will be presented to Josh on Saturday, August 17th, 2002 at the Huntsville Hamfest in Huntsville, Alabama. The committee judging the award also named two runner-up finalists: Evan Anderson, KC0CWP, of Ashland, Nebraska and Thomas Tenaglia, K3TAT, of West Chester, Pennsylvania.

AMATEUR RADIO STATION CALL SIGNS

...sequentially issued as of the first of August 1, 2002:

District	Extra	Advanced	Tech./General/Novice
0	AB0WM	KI0SK	→ KC0NVA
1	AB1BJ	KE1MD	→ KB1QC
2	AB2PM	KG2RP	→ KC2KAG
3	AA3ZZ	KF3ED	→ KB3IJY
4	AG4VM	KV4GK	→ KG4ULL
5	AD5LP	KM5XR	→ KD5TJV
6	AE6HQ	KR6FC	→ KG6MNR
7	AC7VL	KK7XI	→ KD7SGO
8	AB8PO	KI8KD	→ KC8UMT
9	AB9GI	KG9QU	→ KC9CEK
Hawaii	→	AH6RO	NH7OF WH6DGT
Alaska	→	AL7RR	KL1IW WL7CVQ
Virgin Isl.	→	KP2CS	NP2LY WP2AIN
Puerto Rico	WP3T	KP3BN	WP3SP WP4NOZ

[Source: FCC Amateur Service Database, Washington, DC]

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HACKER CONVENTION HELD IN NEW YORK CITY

"Everything has a weakness. Our job is to find it." and "Yes, I'm a criminal, my crime is that of curiosity." ...heard at the gathering.

The bi-annual "H2K2" computer hacker convention was held at the Hotel Pennsylvania in midtown New York City from Friday, July 12th to Sunday, July 14th, 2002. It is also known as "HOPE-2002." (Hackers On Planet Earth.) It was sponsored by "2600," a well known hacker magazine. The cost for the entire weekend was \$50, payable only in cash. Everyone attends anonymously and no names are taken at registration.

It was the biggest gathering of elite hackers ever to take place in the United States. There was a full program of speakers, films, and workshops as well as a wireless 802.11(b) network to keep everyone busy and entertained hacking into it. Among the visitors were many security and computer professionals. The police were noticeably absent, but there was a general feeling that many government intelligence agents attended disguised as hackers.

A workshop entitled "Fun With 802.11b" showed hackers how they could detect, monitor and access someone else's wireless computer network and their private data. Famed radio pirate, Allan Weiner talked about his days operating *Radio New York International* in the 1980's. Today Weiner operates 50kw shortwave station WBCQ which serves nearly the entire western hemisphere from studios in Maine.

Included were sessions on such diverse subjects as the sport of lockpicking and safecracking, computer viruses, brute force password cracking, "national security and the dangers of the Patriot Act," new security systems, low power FM radio, satellite hacking, "magical gadgets," secure phones, "The New FBI and How It Can Hurt You," understanding cryptography, tracking criminals on the Internet ...and more.

HavenCo, an offshore tax haven, gave a presentation on the Principality of Sealand, an island fortress and, as of 1967, a sovereign state located in international waters. It is situated 65 to 100 miles from the coasts of France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany and six miles off the eastern coast of Britain. For the past two years, HavenCo has been offering the world's most secure managed computer servers in "...the world's only true free market environment."

There was even a session on all aspects of intelligence and counterintelligence including covert action in Central America, ECHELON (government information gathering) and how the U.S. completely missed the warnings on bin Laden and 9/11.

According to the pre-convention publicity "Hackers are curious, motivated and intelligent people who like to experiment with systems. H2K2 is mostly for computer hackers, who like to experiment with systems involving computers, telephones and networks. 'Hacker' doesn't

mean the same thing as 'criminal,' even though some hackers engage in criminal behavior. At H2K2, the focus is on helping hackers to hone their skills, share experiences with each other, and have a great time among people with similar skills and interests."

Promoting an electronic democracy in bossy nations

On July 13th an international cult that calls itself "Hacktivism" released free browser-based application software at H2K2 called "Camera/Shy." The "Constitutional Tool Kit" is intended to be used by democracy activists operating in foreign countries, especially China, Southeast Asia and Middle East nations, that censor the Internet from behind national firewalls.

Camera/Shy allows users to easily and secretly access banned content by concealing it inside graphics posted on the Web. The goal is to bypass national firewalls that allow only partial access to global computer networks by disguising such sites to make them look inoffensive. The program allows visitors at public Internet cafes to install the 1.2 megabyte program using a simple floppy disk. The user simply installs the program on a computer, surfs the Web, then removes the program, leaving no electronic footprints of what sites were visited.

Hacktivism is a group of international hackers who seek to further human rights goals through technology. Hacktivism.com has a website which takes "unspecified credentials" to access. Formerly known for creating software used by other hackers to attack undefended computers, they have redirected their efforts towards eliminating government censorship. They operate under the sponsorship of the *Cult of the Dead Cow* (cDc). Based in Lubbock, Texas, the cDc is the most influential hacking group in the world. Hacktivism has operatives spread across North America, Europe, Russia, Israel, Australia, Taiwan, and Korea. On the web: <cultdeadcow.com.>

Camera/Shy was released "open source," license and cost free to anyone who wants to use it. "Designed with the non-technical user in mind, Camera/Shy's "one touch" encryption process delivers banned content across the Internet in seconds," Hacktivism said the "...application enables users to share censored information with their friends by hiding it in plain view as ordinary 'gif' images. Camera/Shy is the only steganographic tool that automatically scans for and delivers decrypted content straight from the Web. It is a stand-alone, Internet Explorer-based browser that leaves no trace on the user's system." The program has automatic cache and history clearing built in so that the browsing experience remains invisible. Camera/Shy works on all Windows operating systems using Internet Explorer 5 browsers or higher.

Hacktivism is also working on programs that will allow anonymous direct email, file trading and untraceable chat programs that bypass conventional Internet monitoring.